Message

From: Bahadori, Tina [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7DA7967DCAFB4C5BBC39C666FEE31EC3-BAHADORI, TINA]
Sent: 10/26/2018 11:23:06 AM
To: Duke, Clifford [CDuke@nas.edu]; Ray Wassel [rwassel@nas.edu]
Subject: RE: Site cleanup

It was great to see both of you. Let me know if I can help with anything.
Tina

From: Duke, Clifford [mailto:CDuke@nas.edu]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 9:51 AM
To: Bahadori, Tina <Bahadori.Tina@epa.gov>; Ray Wassel <rwassel@nas.edu>
Subject: RE: Site cleanup

Tina,

Thank you for this information and for a very useful meeting. I will discuss paths forward with Greg, look forward to further conversations.

Regards,
Cliff

From: Bahadori, Tina <Bahadori.Tina@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2018 3:26 PM
To: Duke, Clifford <CDuke@nas.edu>; Wassel, Ray <RWassel@nas.edu>
Subject: Site cleanup

Two stories on the site clean-up I mentioned:

https://www.opb.org/news/article/portland-harbor-superfund-site-epa-cleanup-plans/

The Daily Feed

EPA cites IRIS study to ease Portland Harbor cleanup

October 23, 2018

EPA is proposing to ease stringent sediment cleanup levels at the costly Portland Harbor Superfund site in Portland, OR, prompted by an updated Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessment that weakened estimated cancer risks for benzo(a)pyrene (BaP), a key contaminant at the site.

"Today's proposal ensures that the cleanup plan is current with the latest science to protect people's health and the environment," acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in an Oct. 22 statement.

The plan could set a precedent for a host of other Superfund sites that are contaminated with BaP and marks a change for the IRIS program, which faces frequent attacks from industry and GOP critics who charge it adopts overly conservative risk values that drive costly cleanup and other regulatory decisions.

EPA Oct. 22 issued a proposed Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) that seeks to explain its reason for revising some of the cleanup levels for BaP, a carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (cPAH), and other cPAHs in the site's record of decision (ROD).

Obama EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy signed the ROD for the high-profile site in early 2017, addressing the cleanup of contaminated sediment for 10 miles of the Lower Willamette River within the site. The cleanup under the 2017 ROD is estimated to cost $1 billion and require as many as 13 years of construction.

The ROD relied on an assessment that EPA conducted in the 1980s but the IRIS assessment that EPA finalized in January 2017 modified the oral cancer slope factor from 7.3 to 1 milligrams/kilogram/day, "resulting in a lower risk estimate associated with exposure to BaP and other cPAHs," the ESD says.

EPA's assessment of BaP is important not just because the compound is a common environmental contaminant but also because EPA has proposed using it as the index chemical in a relative potency factor approach for cPAHs. The chemicals are carcinogenic and stem from a wide range of sources, including crude oil, asphalt and vehicle emissions.

Exponent, an engineering consulting firm on environmental matters, predicted in a February posting on its website that the final risk assessment will result in less stringent soil and groundwater regional screening levels and cleanup goals at sites where cPAHs are the risk driver.

Due to this lower cancer risk, the revised risk assessment has implications for the risk-based human health cleanup levels, target tissue levels and toxic principal threat waste (PTW) thresholds selected in the 2017 Portland Harbor ROD, EPA says.

Following the issuance of the final IRIS assessment, EPA Region 10 started evaluating its application at Portland Harbor, according to an EPA Region 10 spokeswoman. Prior to the plan's release this week, Wheeler was briefed by the region, and concurred on it moving forward, she says. EPA Region 10 Administrator Chris Hladick will be the signatory on any final approval of the revisions, she says.

Specifically, EPA is proposing to soften beach sediment cleanup levels for cPAHs from 12 to 85 micrograms per kilogram (ug/kg); revise the target tissue level for cPAHs in shellfish tissue from 7.1 to 51.6 ug/kg, using a subsistence fisher risk; and alter the total cPAH remedial action level from 13,000 to 30,000 ug/kg, applying to sediments outside the navigation channel, EPA says in a fact sheet. It explains that the remedial action level refers to the contaminant concentration level that the remedy requires to be removed or isolated through dredging or capping.

The agency is also proposing to adopt a direct contact sediment cleanup level for cPAHs of 774 ug/kg for nearshore sediments; change the PTW threshold for cPAHs from 106,000 to 774,000 ug/kg for the entire site; and correct a mathematical error the agency made in determining the shellfish consumption sediment cleanup level for cPAHs, and then revise it based on the new BaP cancer slope factor. This, therefore, would change the sediment cleanup levels based on shellfish consumption from 3,950 to 1,076 ug/kg, based on a subsistence fisher risk, the fact sheet says.

Under the revisions, EPA says the sediment cleanup is expected to lower costs by $35 million, and reduce the 2,200-acre cleanup by about 17 acres.

EPA has extended the comment period to 60 days, giving commenters until Dec. 21 to respond to the proposal.

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